

186 weakening of the Russian control which resulted from Russia's defeat
668 by Japan; the revolution which spread throughout the Empire in 1903 had its repercussions in the Baltic Provinces. In Latvia and Estonia there were peasant risings which developed into *jacqueries* of a peculiarly savage character; harvests were burnt, agricultural machines were destroyed, and considerable damage was done to the large German-Balt and ecclesiastical estates. In Latvia the rising was not only the work of the peasantry, but also of the Social-Democratic party and of a nationalist revolutionary movement known as the *Saricniba*. Petitions were addressed to the Russian Government for universal franchise, freedom of the press and of assembly, the right to teach Lettish in the schools, &c.; and a

[665] Provisional Revolutionary Government was established in Riga. In Lithuania two congresses were summoned to meet simultaneously in Vilna on December 4, 1905; one, consisting of representatives of all the Lithuanian associations, elected Dr. Basanavicius as its president, and voted a resolution demanding the creation of an autonomous Lithuania within ethnographic limits. The other, a congress of the Peasant Union which had been founded by a certain Gabrys, decided not to pay any taxes, to dismiss Russian teachers and pro-Russian municipal authorities, and to establish Lithuanian courts.

● 661 The disturbances were finally suppressed with the utmost ruthlessness by Russian troops, with the assistance of the German Barons; 3,000 Letts were said to have been tried by court martial, about half their number being sentenced to death. The promises made by the Tsar in the stress of the emergency were not kept, or kept only in part, although each of the Provinces was allowed to send representatives to the Russian Duma which was now brought into existence.

[167] Under the Stolypin Government severe measures of repression were introduced; many of the nationalist leaders, such as Karl Ulmanis in Latvia and Konstantin Paets in Estonia, were driven into exile, and a system of colonization was introduced with the object of encouraging a German 'non-native' class of small-holders which would

[186] tend to support the *status quo*. None the less, in spite of the Russian Government's repressive policy, the national spirit which had failed to carry the day in 1905 survived, in one form or another, until the world upheaval in 1914 provided the occasion for a fresh outburst of activity.

II. THE WORLD WAR AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE INDEPENDENT STATES

726 Four factors contributed to the making of the new Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania during the World War: the fall of the Russian Empire; the German occupation of the border provinces

to the institution of the office of President in principle. In August 1932 a Bill creating the office of President and reducing the number of deputies to eighty, which had been adopted by the *Riigikogu* in March, was rejected in a referendum by 330,236 to 315,900 votes. A second and somewhat similar Bill, passed by the *Riigikogu* in February 1933, suffered an overwhelming defeat in a referendum held in the following June, about 67 per cent. of the votes cast being against it—the defeat of both projects being due as much to the opposition of the Socialists as to that of the Liberators.

The Government were therefore obliged to allow the Liberators to put their own proposals to the public vote; but, in the meantime, they extended the emergency law (a mild form of which had applied to certain districts ever since 1924) over the whole country, suppressed all extremist organizations of both the Right and the Left Wings, including the Liberators' League—which by now had cast its nets wide and was believed to have connexions with the Nazi party in Germany, and even augmented the quorum necessary for the acceptance of the Bill. In spite of these precautions the Liberators' project was approved, in the referendum held on October 14–16, 1933, by 416,000 votes to 157,000. Thereupon M. Tõnisson's Government resigned, and M. Paets formed a non-party Cabinet.

The Dictatorship. What was virtually a new Constitution thus came into force on January 24, 1934. To the new office of President of the State, for which elections were to be held every five years by direct and universal suffrage, were attached extremely wide powers, including the conduct of home and foreign policy, the appointment and dismissal of officials, and the initiation of legislation. The President was to appoint the Cabinet, and could dismiss it; he could adjourn the *Riigikogu*, which was now reduced to fifty members—or could dissolve it and hold new elections; he had the right of absolute or suspensive veto on all legislation, and in case of necessity could declare a state of emergency, and promulgate draft laws as decrees.

Pending the presidential elections, which were fixed for April, M. Paets assumed the provisional presidency. The campaign for the nomination of candidates was in full swing, and the chances of the Liberators' candidate, General Larka, appeared very favourable,¹ when, suddenly, on March 12, M. Paets proclaimed a state of emergency on the ground that the Liberators were planning a Nazi *putsch*. Martial law was declared for six months, and General Laidoner was appointed Commander-in-Chief. All party activities were forbidden, the Liberators' organizations were dissolved, and some 500 of their

¹ In January the Liberators had gained an overwhelming victory in the municipal elections; the results of these were annulled, however, after the coup of 1934.

642 leaders (not including General Larka) were arrested.¹ The presidential
661 and parliamentary elections were postponed until the end of the state of
emergency, which was itself prolonged in September for another year.

642 Some attempt to adhere to constitutional procedure was made,
however, in October 1934, when an extraordinary session of the
Riigikogu was summoned; but, in view of the recalcitrant attitude
of the majority of the representatives, it was immediately prorogued,
and in January 1935 President Paets announced the Government's

[475] intention of replacing the new Constitution by a system of corpora-
tive representation. A beginning was made in the following March
with the creation of an Economic Council, ten of whose members
were to be appointed by the President, while the remaining fifteen

[665] would be elected by the Chambers of Commerce. At the same time
the single-party system was introduced, with the foundation of a
Patriotic party under the direction of the Chief of Propaganda.

646 Finally, on January 8, 1936, a Bill empowering the Government to
summon a Constituent Assembly was submitted to a referendum and
approved by 474,218 votes to 148,824. This Bill provided that the
Assembly, which was to adhere to republican and democratic
principles, should consist of two Chambers: the first composed of
eighty members elected by direct, universal, equal, and secret
suffrage on the principle of personal election; the second of forty
members, ten of whom would be appointed by the President and the
remainder by the various public bodies.²

While the results of the elections to this Assembly, which were held
in December 1936, have not been published, it is understood that
little more than half the electorate voted, and that in fifty of the
eighty constituencies only one candidate was presented for election,
while, although some Opposition leaders were returned in the
remaining thirty, even here the majority of seats fell to Government
nominees. Moreover, the restrictive precautions taken during the elec-
toral campaign were such as to evoke a manifesto in the Finnish press
by four former party leaders, MM. Tõnisson, Piip, Kukk, and Teemant.

642 The National Assembly met on February 18, 1937, and was dis-
solved on August 17, after adopting the final draft of the constitu-
tional law presented for their consideration by the Government. Its
main provisions are as follows:

642 The President is elected for six years, by direct, universal, and
646 secret suffrage; the National Assembly consists of a Chamber of

¹ An attempted coup planned by the Liberators in December 1935 was forestalled by the arrest of General Larka and other leaders, and was punished by the infliction of severe sentences on some 166 prisoners, in May 1936. About half of the latter, including General Larka, have since been amnestied.

² e.g. by the Courts of Justice, local government bodies, corporations, churches, cultural boards of minorities, the Civil Guard, &c.

tendency, and sympathetically regarded by the German minority. ⁶⁶⁵
There was also an extreme nationalist and Fascist organization known as the Pehr Konkrusts Society, while the Aizsargi, the para-military organization of the Peasant Union, was also becoming increasingly Fascist in tendency.

In 1933 began a struggle between the Socialists on the one hand, ⁵⁷⁸ and M. Blodnieks' Agrarian-Right-Centre coalition on the other, ⁶⁶⁵ which ended in the *coup* of May 1934. In August 1933 an extraordinary session of the *Saeima*, summoned on the Socialist party's initiative, rejected a Socialist Bill for the dissolution of all Fascist organizations, the dismissal of Fascist officials, and the expulsion of German Nazis from the country.¹ On the other hand, the *Saeima* also rejected a proposal to send to committee a Bill tabled by the Peasant Union in October, which would have enlarged considerably the powers of the President of the State. On March 2, 1934, the Blodnieks Government fell as a result of a disagreement between the Peasant Union and the New Farmers over financial policy, and M. Ulmanis, the leader of the Peasant Union, formed a coalition of his own party, the bourgeois parties of the Right and Centre, and most of the minority groups.

Shortly after the *Saeima* had voted for the dismissal of all Nazi ⁶⁶¹ or Fascist officials employed by the Administration or by local ⁵⁷⁸ government bodies, M. Ulmanis proclaimed a state of emergency on May 15, and ordered the dissolution of the *Saeima*, the cessation of all party activities, and the imposition of martial law for six months.² A strict censorship of the press was established and troops were stationed in various parts of Riga. A Government manifesto gave as justification for these measures the fear lest the internal tension due to the interminable party conflicts, and the failure of the Peasant Union's proposal for constitutional reform, should lead to a state of civil war. A new Government, alleged to be non-party and to consist of experts, was formed on May 17, with M. Ulmanis as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister,³ and General Balodis as Minister for War. All municipal councils were suspended, and new mayors appointed.

The chief victims of the *coup* were the Socialists, a number of who ⁶⁶¹ leaders were arrested on charges of possessing illicit arms,⁴ although i

¹ In the autumn, however, the Government did forbid the wearing of uniforms by political organizations, and dissolved all athletic associations within these organizations, including the 'Workers' Sporting Club'. ² It was later prolonged indefinitely.

³ In July 1936 M. Munters was appointed Foreign Minister.

⁴ In the court martial held on these men in November Dr. Kalnins (formerly Speaker of the *Saeima*) was acquitted, but his son, Bruno, the leader of the 'Workers' Sports League', was sentenced to three years' imprisonment. A further trial of Socialists was held in April 1936 on charges of organizing an illegal revolutionary movement called the Socialist Labour and Peasant Party.

Latvia
Lithuania

- 661 June certain leaders of the extreme Fascist organizations, including the Pehr Konkrusts Society, were also arrested, while in October a number of Lettish Germans and a few German nationals belonging to the Baltic Brotherhood—a society working for the absorption of the Baltic States by Germany—were sentenced to short terms of imprisonment.

642 The Government had announced in 1934 that it would draft constitutional reforms, curtailing the power of the *Saeima* and increasing those of the President, who, by an Army Law of January 1, 1935, was appointed the supreme chief of all the armed forces. On March 19, 1936, a law was issued providing that on the expiry of President Kvisies's second term of office on April 11, M. Ulmanis should become acting President until the completion of the constitutional reform. Meanwhile, preparations were in train for an entirely new constitution on corporative lines; in January 1936 a law was promulgated creating a national economic council, consisting of representatives of the Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Agriculture, Labour, and Artisans, to deal in an advisory capacity with questions submitted to it by the Government. The Council did not meet, however, until January 1938; nor was martial law allowed to lapse until the following February, when it was replaced by a new 'Law for the Defence of the State', giving extraordinary powers to the Minister of the Interior with regard to the press, the liberty of the subject, and the rights of association and assembly.

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4. LITHUANIA

- 665 *Political Parties.* From November 1918 to June 1926, political life in Lithuania was dominated by the nationalist and clerical Christian-Democratic Party,¹ which was founded in 1890, and which,

¹ TABLE 10. *Lithuanian Election Results, 1920-36.*

Parties	Constituent Assembly 1920-3	1st Seimas 1922-3	2nd Seimas 1923-6	3rd Seimas 1926-7	4th Seimas 1936
Christian-Democrats		15	14	14	..
Peasant Union	50	12	14	11	..
Federation of Labour		11	12	5	..
Populists	20	19	16	22	..
Social-Democrats	14	11	9	15	..
Communists	..	5	..	..	..
Farmers' Party	..	..	..	3	..
Nationalists	..	..	..	3	46
Minorities:					
Jews	6	3	6	3	..
Poles	3	2	11	4	..
Russians	..	..	1	..	..
Germans	1	..	2	6	3
Total	112	78	85	85	40

665 Democrats, and shared their nationalist and social policies, while being absolutely opposed to their views of the part that religious interests should play in politics. The Social-Democrats, led by M. Kairys and Professor Cepinakis, were also a nationalist group of pre-War origin, affiliated with the Second International, and with a constitutional programme which included the nationalization of banking and industry.¹

642 Within six months, however, this Cabinet of the Left-Centre was
665 brought to an untimely end; although relatively successful in foreign policy—a Treaty of Neutrality and Non-aggression was concluded with the U.S.S.R. on September 27, 1926—the Government roused opposition at home by the concessions which it was obliged to make to the national minority groups as a *quid pro quo* for their parliamentary support, by giving way to the Social-Democrats' demands that the public services should be purged of Christian-Democratic officials, and above all by its policy of allowing considerable latitude to Communist activity and propaganda. Moreover, the economic depression had not been alleviated, while the hopes of improved trade relations with Russia as a result of the new treaty had been disappointed. Finally, the Government's decision to cut down the army establishment, in compliance with the demands of a section of its supporters, seems to have alienated the officers' clubs.

[661] *The Voldemaras Dictatorship, 1926-9.* The *coup d'état* executed on the night of December 16, 1926, by a number of officers including General Ladyga and Colonels Skorupakis, Plekavičius, and Grigaliūnas, brought into power the Nationalist party, a small group of conservative landowners and industrialists led by MM. Smetona and Voldemaras, which had not appeared as a parliamentary group until the elections to the third *Seimas* in May 1926, when it returned only three members. The Sleževičius Cabinet was now arrested and forced to resign; martial law was declared on the pretext of an imminent Communist *putsch*, and various public buildings were occupied by troops; and President Grinius was compelled to invite M. Voldemaras to form a new government, a task which the latter, with the support of a number of Christian-Democrats, accomplished in a single day. A Rump Parliament, consisting of only forty members of the Right, approved the resignation of President Grinius and of its Speaker, M. Staugaitis (Populist), and on December 19 elected M. Smetona as President and passed a vote of confidence in the new Government.

M. Voldemaras proceeded to draft constitutional amendments, which it was his original intention to submit to a popular referendum;

¹ The Communist party was illegal, and appeared in the first *Seimas* only, disguised as the 'Workers' Group'.

but the opposition from every quarter was so strong that he never ⁶⁴² actually did so. The remnant of the *Seimas* was dissolved on April 12, ⁶⁶⁵ 1927, after a vote of no-confidence; but the Christian-Democrats insisted that any scheme for constitutional revision must be preceded by new elections to the *Seimas*, while the other parties threatened to boycott the scheme altogether. In May the Christian-Democratic members of the Cabinet resigned, and in June the whole party went into opposition. In the autumn, numbers of Social-Demo-^[667] cratic and Populist leaders were thrown into prison, and many more fled to Vilna, where they organized an emigré Opposition movement; martial law and the press censorship were tightened up; and an unsuccessful attempt by a group of army officers, in November, to force M. Voldemaras to compromise with the Opposition only resulted in the dismissal of the Commander-in-Chief. Early in 1928 several more Christian-Democrats were imprisoned, and in May the last of the non-nationalist Government parties, the Labour Federation, withdrew its support.

Finally, on May 15, 1928, the new Constitution was promulgated ⁶⁴² without the Opposition's consent. It provided that the President, who would be elected for a seven-year term by a college of representatives of the whole nation, should have the power to dissolve the *Seimas* and issue decrees when it was not in session; that laws should be drafted by a State Council, and that a three-fifths vote should be required for a vote of no-confidence in the Cabinet;¹ it was to come into force immediately, but was to be ratified within the next ten years. Its publication made singularly little difference to the situation, however, as the Nationalists continued to govern without summoning the *Seimas* for the next eight years.²

By April 1929, when the Social-Democratic party was suppressed ⁶⁶¹ by decree, the prisons were full of the leaders of all parties, while M. Voldemaras was organizing nationalist societies (such as the 'Iron Wolf' and the 'Sharpshooters') into a kind of Fascist Militia, in the hope of undermining the influence of the officers' clubs which had brought him to power. Finally, soon after an abortive attempt to assassinate him in May, he quarrelled with President Smetona and the rest of his colleagues, who attacked his policy in general, and in particular the violently anti-Polish attitude which he had adopted in the Vilna dispute at the League Council. In view of the waning

¹ Other reforms included the reduction of the number of deputies, the raising of the age qualification for the franchise to twenty-four years, and the extension of the *Seimas's* term to five years; it was also proposed to amend the Electoral Law so as to allow majority voting for individual candidates.

² In September 1928, during one of M. Voldemaras's absences in Geneva, the President ventured to promulgate a law setting up the Council of State prescribed by the Constitution, but it seems to have faded into the background when the Prime Minister returned.

● 661 support of the Army and of the President, he was obliged to resign his post on September 19, and, although he subsequently made several attempts to seize the reins again,¹ he never succeeded in doing so.

642 *The Tubelis Administration, 1929-1938.* President Smetona now invited his brother-in-law, M. Tubelis, to form a Cabinet which, with certain alterations, has remained in office to this day; M. Zaunius became Foreign Minister, while M. Rusteika retained the post of Minister of the Interior which he had held under M. Voldemaras. For a time the prospects of a return to normal political life seemed brighter. Political prisoners were released and dismissed officials reinstated; party leaders who had gone into voluntary rustication returned to the capital; in December 1929 even the ban on the Social-Democratic party was raised, although the press censorship was strictly maintained. The first provincial and municipal elections since the *coup* were held in June 1931,² and on December 11 an electoral college, chosen by district assemblies of the new local government bodies, met to re-elect M. Smetona as President for a term of seven years.

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[666] Opposition to the Tubelis Government steadily accumulated, however, on all sides. The persecution of the Social-Democrats continued, and by 1932 the last of the trade unions was dissolved; there was also friction, from 1931 onwards, between the Government on the one hand, and the Christian-Democrats, morally supported by the Vatican, on the other;³ and in November 1935 both the Christian-Democratic and the Populist parties were dissolved by a decree which was confirmed and extended to all Opposition parties in February 1936. The unsuccessful attempts to stage the return of M. Voldemaras, made by small groups of officers in June 1934⁴ and in January 1936, bore witness to a certain amount of disaffection in the Army. [468] More serious were the peasant strikes which broke out in the Suvalki district in August 1935 and the spring of 1936, and the workers' demonstration and strike in Kaunas in June 1936, when the troops had to be called out, and a state of siege was proclaimed in the city. 000 The reshuffle of the Cabinet in September 1936, when new appoint-

¹ In consequence of a series of intrigues he was banished to the country in July 1930, and the 'Iron Wolf' was dissolved in the following August. He was tried and acquitted on a charge of conspiracy in August 1931, and on a charge of misappropriation of funds in September 1932. After the failure of a *putsch*, organized by certain Army officers in June 1934, owing to the loyalty of the majority of the Army and to President Smetona's refusal to negotiate with the insurgents, M. Voldemaras was sentenced by court martial to twelve years' penal servitude on charges of high treason and of accepting assistance from a foreign Power (i.e. Germany). In February 1938 he was granted an amnesty, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of Lithuania's independence.

² They were boycotted by the Opposition parties, however, on account of certain restrictions on the franchise.

³ See above, p. 40.

⁴ See footnote above.

642 dissolved it on March 22, in spite of a warning from the Allied
361 Powers. The Powers, therefore, instituted proceedings against
648 Lithuania at the Hague Court on April 11.² Judgement was not
delivered until August 11,¹ when the Court decided that the Governor
was entitled, for the protection of the interests of the Lithuanian
State, and if no other action could be taken, to dismiss the President
of the Directorate in case of serious acts which violated the Memel
Convention, or which were calculated to prejudice the sovereignty of
Lithuania; that such dismissal did not by itself involve the dismissal
of the other members of the Directorate; that the dismissal of Herr
Böttcher and the appointment of M. Simaitis were in order; but that
the dissolution of the Diet was not in order.

Meanwhile the elections for the new Diet had taken place in May,
and, in spite of German accusations that the Lithuanians had been
guilty of shameless manipulation, the latter only succeeded in secur-
ing five seats. As usual the elections were followed by a peaceful
interlude, in consequence of the appointment of a more liberal-
minded Governor, M. Bylys, to succeed Colonel Merkys, and of a
German President of the Directorate, Dr. Schreiber. In August a
financial agreement was concluded between the Lithuanian Govern-
ment and the Memel Territory.

648 *The Advent of National-Socialism.* The Schreiber Directorate's
chances of stabilizing conditions were to a large extent destroyed by
the accession of Herr Hitler to power in Germany in January 1933,
and were still further diminished by the German-Polish *rapproche-
ment* of 1934, up till when the common hostility of Germany and
Lithuania to Poland had exercised a moderating influence on their
mutual relations:

361 In the summer of 1933 two Nazi parties were founded in Memel;
668 the first, led by Pastor von Sass, with a Left Wing programme, was
661 called the *Christliche-Sozialistische Arbeitsgemeinschaft* (C.S.A.): the
648 second and more conservative, under Dr. Neumann, was known as
the *Sovog* (*Sozialistische Volksorganisation*).³ Alive to the danger of
the movement, the Lithuanian Government in November 1933 ap-
pointed a new Governor, Dr. Novakas, to suppress it. Numerous
foreign officials were dismissed—most of them citizens of the Reich;
labour permits issued to foreigners in private employment were with-
drawn; a law for the Defence of the State enacted on February 8,
1934, penalizing members of seditious organizations, was followed
by the dissolution of both the Nazi parties and the arrest of Dr.
2. [1932 - Anal. 1]

¹ For text see *The Permanent Court of International Justice*, Series A/B, No. 49, p. 337.

² The Nazi party in Germany supported the *Sovog* in preference to the C.S.A., and appears
to have attempted in July to unify the two parties by recognizing Dr. Neumann as leader
of all the Nazis in Memel.

Neumann and other leaders of the *Sovog*. This action called forth a German Note of protest, and the suspension of all local goods traffic across the frontier.¹

In June Dr. Schreiber was dismissed on a charge of encouraging the Nazi movement, and was replaced at first by Dr. Reizgys, and later by M. Bruvelaitis, both of whom were Memellanders and appointed purely Lithuanian Directorates. The authorities now pursued the policy of reducing the Diet to impotence, firstly by disqualifying members of the Diet who belonged to 'seditious organisations',² and secondly by arranging that all the Lithuanian deputies should absent themselves, so that, on the rare occasions when the Diet met, a quorum was not present. In December the trial of 122 Nazis began in Kaunas, on charges of conspiracy for the reunion of Memel with Germany through armed revolt. Four prisoners were also accused of the murder of an official named Jesuttis, who was alleged to have betrayed Nazi plans to the Lithuanian authorities. Undeterred by indirect German pressure exerted through the reinforcement of troops on the frontier, or by representations made by the Guarantor Powers, the Court delivered heavy sentences in March 1935, including four death sentences on the murder charge.³

As a result of an appeal made by Herr Hitler during the visit of Sir John Simon and Mr. Eden to Berlin in March, a joint Note was addressed to Lithuania by Great Britain, France, and Italy on April 19, 1935,⁴ urging an early meeting of the Diet, and the constitution of a Directorate possessing its confidence; the Lithuanian reply was unsatisfactory, but, in the meantime, M. Novakas had been succeeded as Governor by the more moderate M. Kurkaukas, and the German parties had been invited to collaborate in the reconstitution of the Directorate. Shortly after their refusal to do so, the three-year term of the Diet expired, on May 4, and new elections were not held until September. In the meantime the electoral law was amended in such a way as to deprive several candidates (including Dr. Schreiber) of the now united front of pro-German parties, known as the *Einheitsliste*,⁵ of their electoral rights and Lithuanian citizen-

¹ Even the transit through Germany of goods destined for Lithuania was later prohibited.

² The non-Nazi, but German, *Landwirtschaftspartei* was now included in this category.

³ These were later commuted to life imprisonment.

⁴ In July 1934 the Powers had, in reply to a German Note complaining of the situation, adopted the line that complaints should be addressed to the League Council; and, although a committee of jurists appointed by the Council to consider two petitions presented by the Vice-President of the Diet in the following September had pronounced that infringements of the Statute had taken place, the matter had not been brought up for further discussion by the Council—owing, perhaps, to the pre-occupation of the Powers with the Saar Plebiscite.

⁵ The *Einheitsliste* included all the German parties except the Social-Democrats, as well as a number of Lithuanians. It aimed ostensibly at the maintenance of the Autonomous régime, but was supported by vigorous propaganda from the German Reich.

648 ship, and to disenfranchise a large number of voters. Influenced,
361 however, by Herr Hitler's bitter denunciations in the Reichstag on
666 September 15, and by a further *démarche* of the three Powers on the
12th, the Lithuanian Government at last agreed to make certain
concessions with regard to the German parties and to the conduct
of the elections, which were watched by the British *Chargé d'affaires*
at Kaunas, and were on the whole fairly conducted. The net result
of all these efforts was the election of twenty-four candidates of the
Einheitsliste and five Lithuanians; thus the latter failed to gain a
single seat.

642 The usual post-election period of appeasement ensued; for—after
361 the failure of two attempts to form a Directorate under a Lithuanian
648 President—M. Baldzius, a Lithuanian Memellander and a member
of the *Einheitsliste*, was appointed President.¹ The new Directorate,
which received a vote of confidence from the Diet in December,
repealed a number of anti-Nazi measures and began the reinstatement
of officials who had been dismissed on political grounds. During
1936, moreover, there was a marked improvement in German-Lithuanian
relations, beginning with a Lithuanian request for British
mediation at the end of 1935, and continuing with a *rapprochement*
initiated by Germany with startling suddenness in the spring of
1936;² and economic conditions in Memel were considerably benefited
by a frontier traffic agreement concluded between the two countries
in the following August. In October M. Kurkauskas resigned and
was replaced by M. Kubilius, a Lithuanian lawyer who had hitherto
[661] played little part in political life. Although there were fresh arrests
and trials of Nazis during 1936-7, on the other hand a large number
of amnesties were granted,³ and in February 1937 the British Under-
Secretary for Foreign Affairs was able to inform the House of
Commons that 'the political position in the Memel territory is now
generally satisfactory'.⁴

NOTE ON THE ECONOMIC POSITION OF MEMEL

361 The economic prosperity of the Memel Territory is now entirely
433 dependent upon that of Lithuania. This is primarily due to the fact

¹ In January 1936 M. Baldzius was replaced by M. Diomons, also a member of the *Einheitsliste*.

² See above, p. 88.

³ Most of the National-Socialists imprisoned have now been released, including Pastor von Sass (in 1937) and Dr. Neumann (in 1938).

423 ⁴ Unfortunately, however, a fresh occasion for agitation was provided by the Kaunas Government's law of September 6, 1937, expropriating, against compensation, some 440 hectares of territory belonging to 24 German landowners, for military purposes and harbour development. A violent campaign ensued in the German press; and on September 25 M. Baldzius informed the Memel Diet that the Directorate had protested to the Governor against the law on the ground that the expropriation of property was exclusively the concern of the Memel authorities, and had declined to co-operate in its execution. The German Government themselves (although, not being signatories of the Convention, they had no

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foreigners (changing their names, if necessary) vote, rep-000 resent, and rule.

Thus the inhabitants of the Baltic states became Soviet 691 citizens. In the eyes of the new authorities this mass of 461 ● people, who were so well off that they put the rest of the Union to shame, represented a scandalous relic of the past. They had to be educated. Prisons filled and, shortly, certain categories of citizens began to be deported to work camps, mines, and collective farms at the other end of Russia, chiefly in the polar regions. In 1941 the entire area was invaded by the German army. The Nazis, in turn, started to kill off that category of the population which their ideology classified as undesirable, namely the Jews, irrespective of age, sex, or class. To that task they applied their usual precision. At the same time they exported to the Reich a large number of forcibly enlisted workers.

In 1944 the Baltic states were recaptured by the Red 423 Army and the Center set out to assimilate this area into 474 the Union. The most urgent task was the destruction of 669 the existing and wealthy farming economy. Collectivization met with considerable obstacles, however. The usual method, that of "intensifying the class struggle in the village," which speculates upon the antagonism between rich and poor farmers, had feeble results. Training in partisan units, together with the large number of arms left from war-time operations, encouraged opposition. Peasants fled to the woods and formed bands. In reprisal, disciplinary expeditions surrounded villages and killed those who had remained at home. This merely increased the opposition; for whole villages, including women and children, often preferred to join the partisans rather than expose themselves to the danger of being taken hostage.

The hostile attitude of these people forced those in 661 power to resort to radical measures. Big man-hunts were

- 661 instituted. Thousands of cattle-cars loaded with people moved towards uninhabited areas of Euro-Asia. The years in which Western Europe began to enjoy a precarious peace were far from peaceful for the Baltic countries. Villages whose inhabitants were dead, deported, or in hiding stood plundered and empty. The wind whistled through the apertures of broken windows and smashed doors. "Hitlers come and go, but nations remain," the Generalissimo declared in the moment when victory over Germany was certain. As far as smaller national groups are concerned, this statement should be amended to read: "Nations come and go, but the countries remain." In the words of an official of the Center, spoken in 1946: "There will be a Lithuania; but there will be no Lithuanians."

I do not know how many thousands of men and women these states lost before their economies were "reconstructed," i.e. before 1950. Perhaps no one knows the exact statistics. The number of foreign settlers ordered to the places left by the departed natives might serve as an index.

- [166] Moreover, the process is not yet finished. Collective farmers have been imported into the rural areas; administrative cadres and their families, into the cities. In the streets one hears Russian spoken more frequently than Estonian, Latvian, or Lithuanian. The great majority of the Party leaders and higher government officials have Russian names.

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641 The aim of all these moves is to inter-mix the population of the Union. Only by dissolving individual nationalities in the "Russian sea" can one attain the goal of a single culture and a single universal language. The territory that once linked the Baltic states with Germany has been settled by Russians. The city of Koenigsberg, within whose walls Kant was born and spent his entire life, has been re-named Kaliningrad and there is no longer any trace of the

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mild, orderly world the philosopher knew. On the islands 661 •
 lying off the coast of what was once Estonia, no Estonian 641
 fishermen push their boats toward the sea. The pot in
 which the Baltic peoples are being boiled down has its
 lid tightly clamped on. Obviously schools and univer-
 sities, as well as books, all use native tongues. After all,
 the aim is not to destroy individual nationalities; the aim
 is to destroy the class enemy. When the young people
 learn in Lithuanian, Latvian, or Estonian how to be true
 patriots of the Union, and how to appreciate all that
 emanates from the Center, then the Russian language will
 triumph over all competition. At that point, a new level of
 understanding will be attained.*

What cause is there for anger? The little world that 000
 was the Baltic states is known to us from Breughel's coun-
 try scenes: hands clutching jugs, cheeks red with laughter,
 heavy, bear-like kindness. There lived peasant virtues: in-
 dustry, thrift, diligence; and peasant sins: greed, stingi-
 ness, constant worry about the future. The proletariat
 scarcely existed; industry was poorly developed; the agrar-
 ian reform had divided the large estates among the peas-
 ants. But why should this continue? Kulaks were an un-
 forgivable anachronism. They had to be wiped out, and

* "I approached Stalin's portrait, took it off the wall, placed it on the table
 and, resting my head on my hands, I gazed and meditated. What should I
 do? The Leader's face, as always so serene, his eyes so clear-sighted, they
 penetrate into the distance. It seems that his penetrating look pierces my little
 room and goes out to embrace the entire globe. I do not know how I would
 appear to anyone looking at me at this moment. But with my every fibre, every
 nerve, every drop of blood I feel that, at this moment, nothing exists in this
 entire world but this dear and beloved face. What should I do?

"The Soviet government handles the enemies of the people with a firm
 hand. . . .

"These are thy words, comrade Stalin. I believe them sacredly. Now I know
 how to act."

From *Pergale* (Victory) magazine, organ of the Soviet Writers of the Lith-
 uanian SSR, No. 4, April 1950, p. 52, cf. *The Lithuanian Bulletin*, New
 York, Nos. 7-12, July-December, 1950

ALBANIAN INTERLUDE AND BALTIC VISTA 209

populations were deeply rooted in tradition. Estonia, with a prewar population of 1,250,000, had about 900,000 Lutherans and approximately 215,000 Greek Orthodox. There was only a small group of Roman Catholics. Lithuania, on the other hand, with 3,000,000, was predominately Roman Catholic. Minorities of Lutherans, Jews, and Greek Orthodox constituted about one-fifth of the population. More than half of the population of Latvia belonged to the Lutheran Church, but there were substantial Catholic and Greek Orthodox minorities. The organizational activities of the Churches were varied and rich. In Lithuania, for example, with two archdioceses and four dioceses, more than 800,000 persons were enrolled in various lay organizations. The largest daily newspaper was in Catholic hands, and the total circulation achieved by the religious press was impressive. In Latvia likewise, publications under religious auspices numbered more than a fifth of those printed.

The first Communist occupation, dating from June 15, 1940, engulfed all three nations in tragedy. The Russians decreed that every organization established before their seizure of control "jeopardized public security," and religious institutions and organizations were suppressed. Their property was confiscated, and they were forbidden to maintain any contact with the outside world. Religious instruction was curtailed drastically, the clergy being called upon to sign a pledge that they would desist from teaching religion either in public or in private. Waves of Communist propaganda, much of it directed against religion, passed over the country, burying every attempt at counteraction. Within a year the Russians had destroyed every overt vestige of the autonomous culture which these small countries had fostered during the limited time of their independence.

It was done ruthlessly, brutally, barbarously. More than

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210 RELIGION BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

● 66/ 60,000 Lithuanians were deported to Siberia. A number of
733 priests were murdered, and some are said to have been cruci-
799 fied. In Latvia and Estonia the numbers deported appear to
have been smaller; but the clergy of all denominations were
hounded, slain, and shipped to labor camps. It is no doubt
correct to say that no year in the history of predatory imperial-
ism since the dawn of time has been characterized by so com-
plete a lack of restraint. The individuality of the peoples was
rooted out with implacable determination.

661 The Nazis drove the Russians out again, but in turn re-
798 sorted to suppressions of their own. It was a time of dire dis-
697 tress for the Jewish minority, and of course also for anyone
deemed to be opposed to their theories of race superiority.
Deeply religious folk from the Baltic States were shipped to
concentration camps. The Russians returned during the sum-
mer of 1944. This time large numbers of Lithuanians in par-
ticular fled to the West, the total being estimated at 80,000.
Of the remaining inhabitants of the three countries, it is be-
lieved that more than 500,000 have been seized and sent off to
Russian labor camps. There have been at least six round-ups
of slaves. The first was in Estonia at the close of 1948, and it
is believed that 50,000 persons were taken from their homes.
The others have been carried out with the same irrational
callousness. The deportations have stripped the countries af-
fected of virtually all religious leadership which might have
opposed Russian domination. Only 30 of Estonia's 250 Lu-
theran clergymen are still at work there, and comparable
figures have been computed for Latvia. One Catholic priest out
of five remains in Lithuania.

177 It is hardly necessary to state that the economies of the
461 countries affected are exploited for the benefit of Russia. But
861 one can grasp only with extreme difficulty the extent to which
agents of Moscow dominate political and cultural activity.

THE BALTIC SOVIET REPUBLICS

magazines, Komsomol publications and a Latvian literary and art review.²⁶

Individual Latvians and Estonians were serving the Soviet Union in different ways long before their respective countries were compelled to place at the disposal of the U.S.S.R. the whole of their economic assets, natural riches and manpower. Latvians and Estonians gave the Soviet régime not only industrious collective farmers and skilled workers, but also high ranking party and administrative officials, diplomats and G.P.U. agents. The influence exercised by the small Baltic minorities of the Soviet Union during the inter-war period becomes understandable if we bear in mind that they had the highest percentage of Communist Party members of all Soviet nationalities. Thus in 1927, 12,198 Latvians or 8.98 per cent of the entire Latvian minority were party members, while the 2,577 Lithuanian and the 3,682 Estonian communists accounted for 6.2 per cent and 2.38 per cent, respectively, of their national minorities in the U.S.S.R. The importance of these figures can be assessed more properly if we bear in mind that only 0.88 per cent of all Russians and 0.39 per cent of all Ukrainians were organized in the Communist Party at that time.²⁷

The Latvian communists, who had played an outstanding part in the Civil War in the fighting for Petrograd, Moscow and Kazan, had earned the reputation of particular reliability. For a long time they enjoyed preferential treatment and were given many important key positions unattainable by other much more numerous nationalities of the Soviet Union. The most prominent Latvian in Soviet politics was Yan Ernestovich Rudzutak, member of the Politbureau of the All-Union Communist Party, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Peoples' Commissars from 1926 and in this capacity in supreme charge of Russian economic reconstruction. Rudzutak, who had survived several purges, was executed in 1937. Another influential Latvian was Robert Petrovich Eideman, President of the Osoaviakhim, the Soviet A.R.P. organization. He too was executed for treason together with Marshal Tukhachevsky. The nine judges passing the death sentence on Tukhachevsky, Eideman, etc., also included a Latvian, General Alksnis, organizer and commander of the Russian air force. Early in 1938 he was himself removed from office and jailed. The list of outstanding 'Soviet Latvians' of the period between the wars would be incomplete without the mentioning of Robert Indrikovich Eikhe. For over ten years he was the ruler of Western Siberia, at first as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Siberian Territory (Sibkray), and after 1929 as First Secretary of the West Siberian party organization. In 1935 he became an alternate member of the Bolshevik Politbureau. He also did not survive the big purge.

The Baltic refugees in the Soviet Union not only occupied important